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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1948.

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Why Allies Failed To Stop Japanese Advance

MALAYA'S PARLIAMENT MEETS

Two Women Members Included

Singapore, Feb. 23.—Malaya's first central "Parliament," set up under the new 23-day old Federal Constitution, and including two women, met for the first time this morning at Kuala Lumpur, 200 miles northwest of Singapore.

The new constitution replaced the previous system of four federated states, five non-federated states and two separate British settlements of Penang and Malacca.

The new 75-member Federal Council represents the nine Malay states and the two settlements.

The British High Commissioner Sir Edward Gent, who nominated most of the 61 non-official members of the Council, presided at today's meeting, which was occupied with the swearing in of the Council members and the appointment of committees.

Lord Listowel, Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, was also present.

Malayans, with 31 seats, hold the majority among the non-official members. The Chinese, who earlier threatened to boycott the Council because of their alleged inadequate representation, were given 10 seats. —Reuter.

MOSLEY AND MUSSOLINI

London, Feb. 23.—The Minister of State (Mr. Doreen McNeill) told the House of Commons tonight that the British Government had documents captured from Axis files, inferring that Sir Oswald Mosley was "in closest touch" with Mussolini and the Italian Fascist movement, and he indicated that Mosley had received financial support from the Italians.

Replying to a question, Mr. McNeill said British investigation of the Mosley link with Mussolini had not yet been completed.

Mr. Emrys Hughes (Labour) asked whether there was any reference to financial assistance to Mosley's party.

Mr. McNeill: "I have made it plain we are talking about inferences, but I should not like to pretend the subject of money did not feature in the correspondence." —United Press.

ILLUMINATING DESPATCH BY GENERAL WAVELL

Poor Singapore Preparations

London, Feb. 23.—Inadequate air forces, lack of air cover for a severely reduced naval striking force, and the failure of land reinforcements to arrive until it was too late to save the situation were the chief causes of the Allied failure to check the Japanese advance in the South-West Pacific.

The acute difficulties under which the British, Dutch and Australian Joint Command operated in January and February, 1942, were disclosed tonight in the despatch of General Sir Archibald Wavell, the Supreme Allied Commander in the South-West Pacific, now Field Marshal Lord Wavell.

Summing up the situation which drove the Allies back through The Netherlands East Indies and Malaya, General Wavell declared: "Our enemies moved too quickly on a simple effective plan and never gave us time to collect the forces necessary to remedy our initial weakness and to make headway against them. Air was the vital factor on both sides. Without air superiority, our naval forces, even had they been stronger, could have accomplished little as the danger of operating warships within range of shore-based aircraft without fighter cover was shown on several occasions during the short campaign.

"The effect of enemy air superiority on land operations has been exaggerated, the material damage done and the casualties caused were comparatively small, but the moral effect was great."

Giving the Japanese credit for the efficient planning of the use of their air forces, General Wavell declared he nevertheless believed the Japanese air arm was not a really formidable force once it could be met on anything like equal terms. Its methods were stereotyped.

He declared that all would have been well if all the aircraft promised the ABDA Command had arrived on time and well-protected aerodromes to receive them could have been established with sufficient ground organization to service them. "But in the ABDA Command, we never had the time to assemble a sufficient force or to create favourable conditions for them to operate."

The Wavell despatch covered the period January 15 to February 23, 1942, the period of the existence of the ABDA Command which was set up to cover the defence of Burma, Malaya, The Netherlands East Indies and the Philippine Islands. "The despatch reveals that Lord Wavell had, from the start, argued that Burma should be placed under control from India and not included in the ABDA Command. Periodically in his account of the phase of Allied activities, he mentions the efforts to send reinforcements and ammunition to General



VISCOUNT WAVELL

Douglas MacArthur in the Philippines, but this was found impossible except for small quantities of arms. Another factor emphasized by General Wavell as contributing to the general inability to check the Japanese was the method by which reinforcements of men were arriving in the final stages of the operations. In the final stages, when a matter of extreme urgency, ships with reinforcements were not loaded tactically. This was a handicap.

"For instance, the personnel of a machine-gun battalion arrived in Java and might have been invaluable, but their machine guns and equipment were in another ship, due many days later.

"In fact, it was usually necessary for several flights of ships to arrive, sometimes spread over two or three weeks, before one formation, such as a brigade, was complete. Such economy of shipping space may be essential, but it is apt to prove a grave tactical handicap."

Speaking of the broad overall aspect of operations, however, General Wavell contrasted the position with the defence of Greece, a year earlier, when he said it might

have been argued it would have been better to concentrate on holding Crete and the gains in Libya.

In the South-West Pacific, he said, it might have been considered more prudent to let The Netherlands East Indies go and concentrate on making Burma and Australia secure.

"Our attempt to hold The Netherlands East Indies has cost us Burma and has placed India and Ceylon in danger," he declared, but that, in both instances (Greece and East Indies), we took no doubt.

He added: "The principle of engaging the enemy as closely and as far forward as possible must be maintained at all costs and will, in the end, bring victory."

Before he assumed command on January 15, General Wavell cabled to the Chiefs of Staff in London that he seemed an attack on enemy shipping by air and submarine and on enemy air bases by air should be a primary objective and that to secure a line of naval and air bases Port Darwin-Timor-Java-Southern Sumatra-Singapore would probably represent the limit possible with the resources which were likely to be available.

General Wavell flew to Singapore, arriving on January 7. He said he had realized from the first "that a race against time was involved if the line I had indicated to the Chiefs of Staff was to be held and that much would depend upon the capacity of the troops in Malaya to delay the Japanese north of Johore till sufficient reinforcements could arrive."

He was concerned to find no defence had been made or even planned in detail on the north side of Singapore Island, "although it was obvious by now that we might be driven back into the island and have to defend it."

General Wavell said he ordered these defences to be put in hand at once, received from Mr. Alfred Duff Cooper, the Cabinet representative in the Far East, "a gloomy account of the efficiency of the civil administration and the lack of co-operation between the civil and the military."

General Sir A.E. Percival, the commander in Malaya, and the Governor, Sir Shenton Thomas, promised full co-operation.

Paucity Of Allied Resources

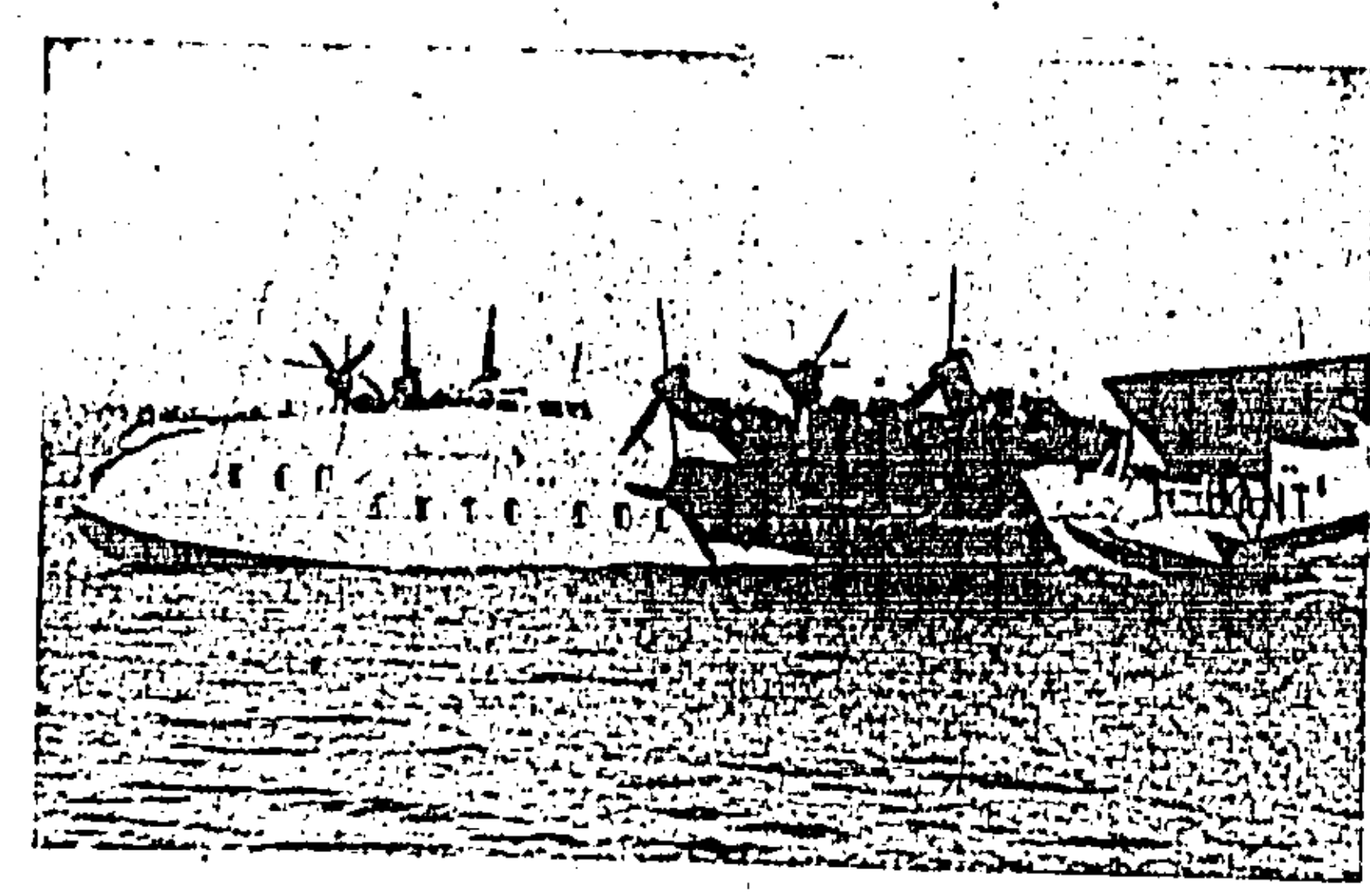
The first strategic conferences with the American, Dutch and Australian principal officers of the ABDA Staff revealed the paucity of the Allied resources to meet the Japanese advance and the urgent need for reinforcements.

Contrary to the opinion of the American and Dutch representatives, General Wavell said he was unable to see how, with the very limited resources, the Allies could afford to reinforce forward air bases such as Ambolna, Kendari in the Celebes, Keopang in Timor, Samarinda in North Borneo, and Sebang in North Sumatra.

He emphasized that "our immediate objectives should be to secure Singapore and to check or hamper the Japanese advance into Borneo and eastwards."

During another visit to Malaya, General Wavell said he had cabled the Chiefs of Staff that the battle for Singapore would be "a close run thing."

(Continued on Page 4)



Jews' New Campaign Of Terror

Jerusalem, Feb. 23.—Four British vehicles were blown up by Jewish road mines in Jerusalem today in what was considered the beginning of a new terrorist campaign against the British military and police.

The Jewish Agency demands that all British forces withdraw from the Jewish quarter of the city and the mining of the streets against British vehicles was regarded as a challenge to British authority.

Subsequent terrorist threats to kill all British soldiers and police found inside the area led competent observers to predict a showdown shortly between the two forces.

The British security forces, under instructions not to shoot until shot at, are fast losing patience.

DIGGING OUT BODIES

After a night of tension, digging was still going on today in the ruins of Ben Yehuda Street, Jerusalem's main Jewish shopping centre, blasted by yesterday's dawn explosion which shattered hotels, shops and blocks of flats.

Six more dead were dug out of the rubble today and Jewish reports reported a total death toll of over 50. Official police figures had earlier put the casualties at 33.

Although rescue squads were still standing by today, it was doubtful whether anyone was left alive.

A 51-year-old Scot of Perth was stated to be missing, feared dead, in the explosion.

Hundreds of Jewish civil guards and men of the Hagannah, the Jewish defence force, formed human chains to clear the fallen masonry and twisted girders in their search for possible survivors.

ARAB'S ADMISSION

Abdul Kader Hussein, the veteran Arab guerrilla leader, tonight claimed responsibility for yesterday's Ben Yehuda Street explosion, which he said was a reprisal for the past week's Jewish "basket bomb" explosion in Ramleh, west of Jerusalem.

Six Arabs were killed and 32 injured, 16 seriously, in the explosion in the Ramleh market place.

Abdul Kader Hussein, now commander of the Arab fighting forces in Jerusalem, said tonight that any further Jewish outrages would be met with "more and more reprisals."

He made this statement in a communique issued to the Arab press.

Hagannah, the Jewish defence organization, in a radio broadcast in Arabic tonight, accused the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin El Hussein, of ordering Abdul Kader Hussein by cable from Egypt to admit the responsibility for the blasting in Ben Yehuda Street "for his own and his followers."

DEMAND REJECTED

There were more British casualties in Jerusalem today following the call of Irgun Zvai Leumi, the Jewish "terrorist" organization, who blamed the British for the explosion.

The Palestine Government today flatly rejected the demand by the Jewish Agency that British forces should be withdrawn from all Jewish areas of Jerusalem and that Army and police vehicles should be searched by Jews on roadblocks around the Jewish quarters.

Jews exploded a road mine under a British armoured car in the streets of Jerusalem's Jewish quarter tonight after the quarter had been planted with a number of electric mines to be used against any British vehicle entering the area.

No British casualties were caused, it was believed, but one Jew was injured when the blast tore down part of a nearby house.

A British military vehicle was blown up by a mine today outside a Syrian orphanage, and a British Army officer and two soldiers were injured. —Reuter.

Bad Weather Stops Search

Cherbourg, Feb. 24.—Bad weather hampered the search today for victims of the giant French seaplane which crashed in the Channel on Saturday, killing 10 persons.

Small boats were unable to put out. High winds grounded planes.

Two bodies and some wreckage have been found. The 20 passenger plane was on a test flight. It crashed in a squall near a 1944 invasion beach. —Associated Press.

(The picture above, reproduced by courtesy of Shell Aviation News, shows the type of seaplane which crashed in the Channel, with its 10 victims).

Britain To Concentrate On Bombers

London, Feb. 23.—Britain is giving special attention to the training of her bomber force, realising that the "existence of an efficient striking force is her most effective safeguard against aggression," the Air Minister, Mr. Arthur Henderson, said in the House of Commons today.

In a memorandum of the air estimates for the next financial year, he said something like a complete reconstruction of the Air Force was being carried out at a time of rapid technical development.

The Air Council aimed at enabling a substantial weight of air power to be developed at short notice in any area where it might be needed.

"Great importance is attached to increasing the mobility of the force and reducing its dependence on a widespread and elaborate base organisation," Mr. Henderson said.

Mr. Henderson said the estimates for the next financial year at £273,000,000 were £41,000,000 less than the 1947-1948 figures.

The regular part of the Air Force numbered about 100,000, a decrease of 45,000 over the past year. —Reuter.

Bomb Threat

London, Feb. 23.—Guards on all Government buildings in London were "alerted" tonight after a threat to blow up a building which housed a department of the Colonial Office.

After an anonymous caller, speaking with a foreign accent had telephoned warning the staff to evacuate within three minutes, a box, containing two large dry-cell batteries attached by wires to a glass jar containing fluid, was found behind a door in the main entrance hall of the building, which is opposite the House of Parliament. —Reuter.

Thaw Succeeds Blizzards

London, Feb. 23.—The icy spell, which, for two days, prevailed over nearly the whole of England and Wales, has been followed by a thaw, which brought an improvement in road conditions in most parts of the British Isles.

Tonight, all the main roads in England and Wales are open to traffic except two—one in Hampshire and the other on the Kent-Surrey border.

Ireland, Yorkshire and parts of Lancashire had bright sunshine today. In contrast, several Kent villages were still cut off and received milk and provisions by sledge.

The Air Ministry gives no promise that the thaw will continue and describes the outlook as doubtful. It was still snowing in parts of Kent and Yorkshire this morning and Automobile Association reports there has been no change for the better in road conditions.

The heavy snowfalls over some areas during the weekend have increased travellers' troubles—the worst districts being Essex, Kent,

Protests Greet 3-Power Parleys

London, Feb. 23.—Three protests from Slav countries and the third rejection of a protest from Russia marked the opening in London today of a conference between Britain, and the United States on Germany's economic future.

The main decision of the conference was to invite the Benelux countries—Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg—to join in discussing the items of the agenda that are of direct interest to them.

The third rejection of Russia's recent note objecting that the conference violates the agreements with her came from Britain. France and the United States had already rejected this.

In a note handed to the Soviet Ambassador in London tonight, the British Government said it "cannot accept the validity of the Soviet Government's contention that the convocation of the conference in London is a violation of the agreement regarding the control machinery in Germany or of the Potsdam Agreement."

PROTEST SURPRISES

Expressing surprise that the Soviet Government "should have seen fit to protest against this attempt by the other occupying powers to solve the urgent problems facing them in the areas of Germany for which responsibility was assigned to them by reason of the occupation of Germany," the note added: "The British Government are determined to take all practicable steps to alleviate conditions in order that the peaceful recovery of Germany and Europe may not be prejudiced."

The note referred to "the opposition which the Soviet Government have continually shown to the working out of a genuine economic unity for Germany which, it said, had imposed a 'heavy burden' on Russia's allies."

Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia in notes delivered both to Britain and to the United States today, protested that the conference was "an attempt to settle the German question in a manner contrary to the most vital interests of the European nations."

This attempt would transform Germany into a hot bed of chaos, giving rise to new aggression and menacing the peaceful development of Europe," they said.

They demanded "the complete implementation" of the Potsdam Agreement on the Council of Foreign Ministers "which must consult with the governments of other Allied countries when discussing questions of immediate interest" to them.

Official quarters in London tonight refused to disclose the precise terms of the conference invitation to the Benelux countries, which was unanimously agreed upon, but it is already clear that they have not been invited to become full members of the conference.

HESITANT SOVIET POLICY

M. Molotov may be instructed to change his present policy on Germany if the tripartite conference produces a firm line, according to reports received from Paris diplomatic quarters.

These reports confirm the impression which has prevailed here recently that Russia's policy in Germany is hesitant, and that the Russians are very anxious to get the four Foreign Ministers conferences going again.

One reason given in well-informed quarters in Paris for this Russian desire is that the Kremlin wants to retain its right to a say in what happens in West Germany. —Reuter.

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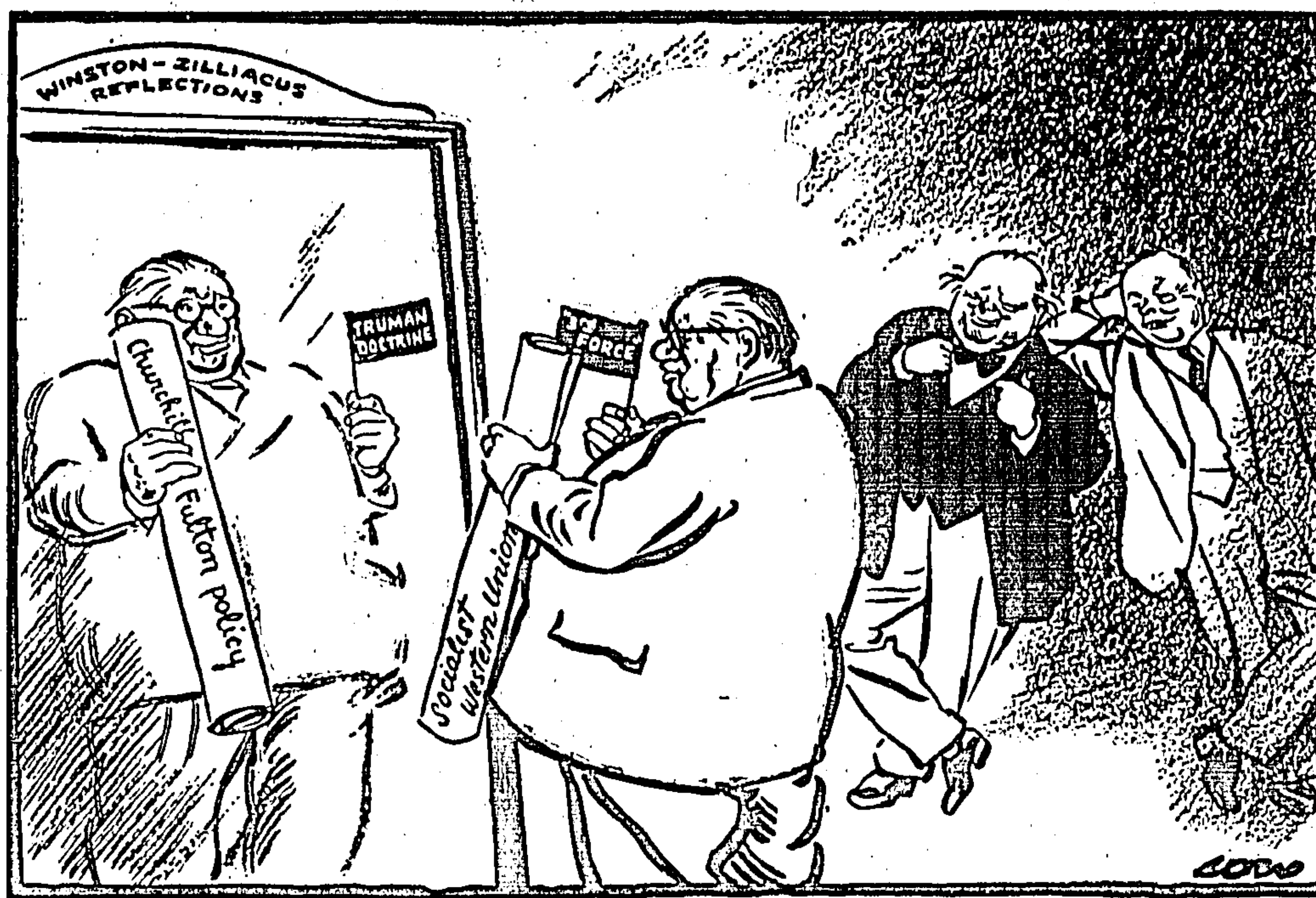
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TO THE END!

LAUREL & HARDY

A CHUMP AT OXFORD



SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE MIRROR

YORKSHIRE TO SOUTH AFRICA ON £150 PER HEAD

When you read about trekkers, you are usually prepared for a grim story of trouble and hardship, of danger and adventure, and of tough men and women clad in shorts and sun helmets. And that was exactly the kind of story I hoped to get from Captain Arthur Follows, who, as a desert navigator with the Royal Armoured Corps, took in the North Africa campaign and is now conducting a party of 19 from Yorkshire to South Africa, when I met him in Cairo recently.

But time marches on, and even trekking—if you do it under such experienced leadership—can be more like a pleasure trip nowadays. Thus, in any case, is what Capt. Follows, whose home is at Willow Crescent, Holton, Leeds, planned it to be when, after seven years of service overseas and a year back in civvy street as an export agent, he decided one day to put an advertisement into a Yorkshire paper asking for fellow trekkers to South Africa.

The response was astonishing. More than 200 people applied, and Capt. Follows personally interviewed 150 of them. But, being a man of experience, he knew what he wanted right from the start. There were to be no young children in the party, and no people who did not have the "right spirit" for such an enterprise.

MAPPED OUT

FOR Captain Follows and his wife Alice, whom he married in Damascus in 1945, had it all mapped out. Trekking? Yes... But no hardships, no discomfort, no shortage of cash, no hurry and, as for food and equipment, only the very best would do.

Thus, after four months of preparation in Leeds and London, the party was all set. It consisted of 19 people—six married couples, a boy of 17, a girl of 15, and five single men. They came from Leeds, Keighley, Horsforth, Harrogate and Wakefield.

For their transport Capt. Follows bought three brand new four-wheel-drive vehicles from the Army, two Chevrolet command cars and one three-ton lorry, as well as 14 spare tyres.

and as many spare parts as he could find.

Sleeping accommodation was another problem. But unlike other trekkers, Capt. Follows did not want his party to sleep in the vehicles. Each person, therefore, has a camp-bed complete with bedroll and covers; each person has its own tent, and several more are provided for the bachelors and the two children.

Cooking equipment was bought in Britain and the party had everything they needed, with the exception of food—cigarettes, when they left Leeds.

CROSSED CHANNEL

THEY went straight to Dover, and across the Channel to Ostend.

"Since then," Capt. Follows told me, "we have had bacon and eggs for breakfast, sandwiches and tea for lunch, and a complete three-course dinner each day. We have as much as we can possibly stand of meat, butter and jam, fruit, vegetables, and potatoes, and I doubt if anybody at home has eaten as well as we have for the past ten weeks."

I was flabbergasted. "But how on earth did you do it?" I asked.

"Very simple, indeed," he exclaimed. "We bought all our supplies in Ostend in Belgium, enough to last us comfortably until Cairo, as well as plenty of English cigarettes, which we found were not very expensive in Ostend. And here we are buying some more to last us for the second part of our trek."

Capt. Follows and his trekkers keep to a strict routine. Everybody gets up at 7 a.m., and breakfast, 7.30 and, after the cooks have prepared the lunch-time sandwiches, they set off at 8 a.m. sharp. Among the party are six experienced drivers who keep two-hour shifts. They drive non-stop from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m., then have a half-hour break for lunch and continue until shortly after dark.

LIKE THE ARMY

THE whole group is divided into "working detachments," and everybody is detailed to do something. Follows runs it the way the Army taught him. There is the cooking group, headed by attractive, dark-haired 25-year-old Mrs. Follows, who is in charge of the "rationing." The other women do the actual cooking.

There are the men detailed to put up and take down the tents each day. There are the chorons, those who keep the vehicles in perfect shape, and there is even a "liaison officer," Mr. A. Cockburn, former Lee's engineer, who puts suggestions and complaints before their leader.

By
OSCAR GUTH

"You've got to have it that way," said Capt. Follows, "as otherwise, in a group of 'thirties, you are bound to get differences of opinion about who is to do what today, and why. With us everything has run quite smoothly so far, and all of us are in good spirits. We take it easy and enjoy the trip tremendously. Everybody is content and I hope we shall all feel that way when we arrive in Durban."

TEN COUNTRIES

IN ten weeks they have travelled through ten countries. From Ostend they drove via Paris over the Pyrenees, crossed into Spain, down to Algiers, Tripoli, Benghazi, Tobruk, Capuzzo, Sidi Barrani and on to Cairo. In all the 5,000 miles they covered in the journey to Egypt they have had only one punctured tyre.

Decision through a country, one can naturally not form a very definite opinion about its people or its attitude towards the British, said Capt. Follows, "but in Spain it appeared quite obvious that all those who cared were pro-British."

Mrs. Follows was particularly interested by the women she saw in the various countries through which the party passed. What impressed her most were the women of Madrid and "how smartly dressed they are."

INTERPRETER

ACTING as interpreter to the party, Mrs. Follows, who speaks English, French, Arabic, and a spot of Turkish and Armenian—she was born in Damascus—advises future

travellers to make sure to have a linguist amongst them. "It is difficult to get on, unless you can make yourself understood," she added.

Before leaving London, they booked first class accommodation for themselves and space for their vehicles in a Nile steamer from Shellal to Doha. This has cost them £400 for the vehicles, and a further £40 per head for each of the passengers. Yes, they are trekking in style, and the cumbersome road up the Nile would certainly not fit into Capt. Follows' plans for a "pleasure trek."

They have already spent £160 for previous crossings at Dover and Algiers, and the total cost of petrol for the trip is estimated at £600. But Capt. Follows hopes to be able to stick to the cost of £150 per head for his passengers, as it was calculated back in Leeds.

"It might cost a bit more for myself and my wife," he told me, "but then, we have taken the responsibility to get these people safely and, above all, comfortably to Durban for £150, and we don't want to go back on that now."

FINANCE

THE vehicles are Follows' own property. He bought them from the Army for £352 10s. each and is changing his companions only for a bare minimum for wear and tear. In South Africa he will sell them, and only then will he be able to tell how his financial calculations have worked out. "But I gather I'll lose quite a bit," he added thoughtfully.

The trekkers have no illusions about the new life they are going to in South Africa. Capt. Follows, who plans to open a catering business, sums it up like this: "We are not looking to South Africa as a country where the streets are paved with gold, but we are looking forward to proving that we have the qualities which go to make up a welcome settler."

BY THE WAY by Beachcomber

MRS RUMPUS, the Socialist Member for Ribbles, asked the Minister of Bubbleblowing at question-time whether his attention had been drawn to reports that three Persian entertainers were trying to obtain a permit for a plank on which to play see-saw; whether, in view of the crisis in the affairs of the country, he thought this a favourable moment to encourage aliens to play see-saw in hotel vestibules, whether it was true that the version of see-saw played by these aliens was not the English version; and what steps he proposed to take to direct those Persian Butterflies into some activity connected with the export drive. The Minister was understood to say that his departmental experts were dealing with the matter.

Pitiful appeal
MEANWHILE: "O Minister, we three get no further, please. We now have more forms, but since they all make large mention of lipstuck, of which we know nothing, we cannot be of filling them, no yes. Pardon, but of this delaying of our plank we lose gold, so how can we do an engagement for a hostel without our plank? Ho, hurry, Minister, by goodness sake, can you? Honourable Minister, we are true to you, ho yes. "Fifthistun Trio."

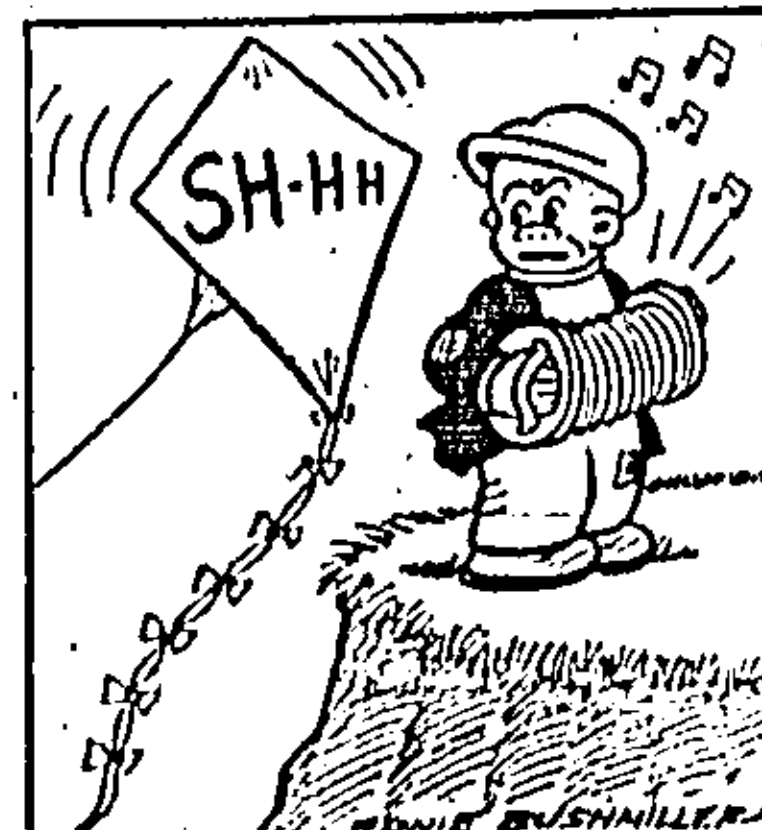
On the job
THEY are telling the story of a Whitehall official who was crawling about on a farm, trying to find something to report. He saw a boy go into a field where there were a lot of hens, and watched him collect a number of eggs. He reported him for robbing birds' nests.

Try this over on your guano
MRS. TRELIS, of Bird Edge, Penwiper-in-Menhallor, Cornwall, has taught a tame seagull to sing "Guano."

Odd occurrence
LADY CADSTANLEIGH has complained that two small men approached her in the street, swept off their hats, bowed low, and said in chorus, "Good-morning to all of you from both of us." When she rebuked them, they beckoned to three friends, who joined them. The friends, swept off their hats and bowed low; and all except one said, "Good-morning to bits of you from four of us." There the matter rests at present.

Museum piece
Hemidemisemiquaver used by Brahms in the Schicksalslied, and later in the Brahmslied.

NANCY The Height of Insults



By Ernie Bushmiller



GEN. WAVELL'S PACIFIC WAR DESPATCH

The Netherlands East Indies.—
uter.